

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 VIENTI 00989 030921Z
ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 PM-03 INR-05 INRE-00 CIAE-00
NSC-05 NSCE-00 PRS-01 SY-02 SSO-00 AS-01 L-01
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FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 8271
SECDEF WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE
JCS NIACT IMMEDIATE
CINCPAC NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY RANGOON NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 0989

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINR PROP MILI CGEN
SUBJ: DEFENSE DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEE CLANDESTINELY EN ROUTE TO HANOI

1. AUSTRALIAN CONSUL INFORMED US IN STRICT CONFIDENCE SUNDAY, JULY 3 THAT LPDR POLICE HAVE AN AMERICAN CITIZEN IN CUSTODY IN PEACE HOTEL (TRANSIENT FACILITY FOR FOREIGNERS) IN VIENTIANE TOGETHER WITH AN AUSTRALIAN CITIZEN. AUSTRALIAN HAS VISA TO HANOI. AMERICAN DOES NOT REPEAT NOT. NEITHER HAS LAO VISA, WHICH IS REASON FOR THEIR DETENTION.
2. AUSTRALIAN CONTACTED AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY. AMERICAN DID NOT REPEAT NOT CONTACT US.
3. ACCORDING TO AUSTRALIAN CONSUL, WHO HAS SPOKEN TO AMERICAN, HE IS UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE EMPLOYEE NAMED "CHARLIE SEARS", FORMER EMPLOYEE OF
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PAGE 02 VIENTI 00989 030921Z

DEFENSE ATTACHE OFFICE IN SAIGON UNTIL HIS DEPARTURE FROM SAIGON IN 1975 EVACUATION.

4. BOTH AUSTRALIAN AND AMERICAN ARRIVED VIENTIANE SATURDAY, JULY 2, ON AEROFLOT FLIGHT FROM RANGOON. THEY WERE "BUMPED" IN VIENTIANE FOR LACK OF SPACE ON ONWARD FLIGHT TO HANOI. AMERICAN'S CHECKED BAGGAGE

HAS GONE ON TO HANOI. HE HAS HAND BAGGAGE IN SUFFICIENT QUANTITY TO SUGGEST TO AUSTRALIAN CONSUL THAT HE IS PREPARED FOR SOME DELAY EN ROUTE TO DESTINATION.

5. "SEARS" TOLD AUSTRALIAN CONSUL THAT NIGHT BEFORE HE LEFT SAIGON HE WORKED SO LATE THAT HE COULD NOT GET HOME TO SEE HIS "WIFE". NEXT DAY "THE GENERAL" ORDERED EVACUATION BY HELICOPTER AND "SEARS" WAS UNABLE TO GET HIS WIFE OUT. "SEARS" SAID ATTACHE OFFICE HAD BURNED \$2 MILLION IN U.S. CURRENCY IN ADDITION TO \$2 MILLION HE SAID WAS BURNED BY EMBASSY, AND INDICATED HE WAS AWARE OF SOME "FLAP" ABOUT THIS QUESTION.

6. "SEARS" SAID HE HAD APPLIED FOR VIETNAMESE VISA IN RANGOON BUT, NOT OBTAINING ONE, HAD SHOWED CARBON COPY OF HIS VISA APPLICATION TO AEROFLOT WHICH APPARENTLY ACCEPTED THIS AS VISA AND LET HIM ON FLIGHT. IT APPEARS THAT "SEARS" WILL MOVE TO HANOI ON AEROFLOT FLIGHT LEAVING VIENTIANE TUESDAY, JULY 5.

7. ACTION REQUESTED: A) ANY INFORMATION DEPARTMENT HAS ON "SEARS". B) INSTRUCTIONS ON ANY ACTION DEPARTMENT WISHES US TO UNDERTAKE IN REGARD TO "SEARS". "SEARS" ASKED AUSTRALIAN CONSUL SPECIFICALLY NOT TO INFORM AMERICAN EMBASSY OF HIS PRESENCE IN VIENTIANE. IF DEPARTMENT DESIRES I COULD CONTACT AEROFLOT AND TELL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 VIENTI 00989 030921Z

THEM I UNDERSTAND THEY HAVE AN AMERICAN PASSENGER WHO DOES NOT HAVE VISA REQUIRED FOR ENTRY INTO VIETNAM. SINCE STRICT APPLICATION OF IMMIGRATION RULES WOULD REQUIRE AEROFLOT TO FLY "SEARS" BACK FROM HANOI TO RANGOON IF VIETNAMESE DENY HIM ADMISSION, THIS MIGHT BE DESIRABLE MEANS OF AVOIDING HIS DETENTION UPON ARRIVAL IN NORTH VIETNAME AS ILLEGAL ENTRANT. ALTERNATIVELY, I COULD TRY TO CONTACT "SEARS" AND POINT OUT TO HIM PROBLEMS WHICH WOULD ARISE FROM HIS ARRIVAL IN VIETNAM WITHOUT PROPER VISA.

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